liberalised economy and competitive environment in the fields of :—

— Emphasis on direct buying and selling operations in commodities like Coffee, tea, jute goods, oilseeds extractions;

— Development of captive supply base through joint ventures in the steel sector with Neelanchal Ispat Nigam Ltd. (NINL) for setting up of an iron and steel plant and Konark Met Coke Ltd. (KMCL) for producing coke and then supply to NINL for consumption in the blast furnance;

— Diversification of trading activities in new areas like gold and silver and export of jewellery and consolidation of the existing ones;

— Strengthening overseas market network and ware-housing by way of setting up of wholly owned subsidiaries;

— Infrastructural development for ensuring smooth and efficient handling of bulk items of export/ import;

— Diversification of trading activities by MMTC in the non-traditional area of agro-products etc.

Legal Aid to Poor People

666. SHRI DATTA MEGHE : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the funds allocated to Maharashtra under the Legal Aid Scheme for poor people during 1995–96, 1996–97 and 1997–98, till date; and

(b) the steps taken to streamline the above system and to ensure assistance to the needy people in time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) The allocation of Central Funds is not done on "State Basis". The expenses of the State Legal Aid & Advice Boards etc. are met out of the State Funds provided by the respective State Governments. The grants-in-aid released to the Maharashtra State Legal Aid & Advice Board etc. during the financial years 1995–96, 1996–97 and 1997–98, till date, are as under:—

Sl. No.	Financial Year	Amount of the grant-in-aid released (in Rupees)
(1)	1995–96	—
(2)	1996–97	2,05,000
(3)	1997–98 (upto 18.11.1997)	3,00,000

(b) The proposal is afoot to convene a meeting of the Executive Chairman of the State Legal Services Authorities constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 to further streamline and review the system to ensure that financial assistance provided to the State Legal Services Authorities could be more effectively utilised for implementation of various Legal Aid Programmes envisaged under the said Act.

[English]

Taxes Pending Against Big Corporate Sector Companies

667. SHRI I.D. SWAMI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the name of the big corporate sector companies who borrowed more than Rs. 500 crore as on April 1, 1997 from the Indian banks and financial institutions, etc.;

(b) the Government liabilities pending against the above mentioned corporate sector companies like excise, customs and income tax etc.; and

(c) the total amount of borrowings as well as the total amount of liabilities against each such company?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House to the extent available and permissible under the rules.

[Translation]

Wholesale Price Index

668. SHRIMATI KETAKI DEVI SINGH : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to include some more services under the Wholesale Price Index;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to include telephone and transport service under the Wholesale Price Index:

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the time by which the final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (d) The government have set up a Working Grounp to revise the current series of the Wholesale Price Index so as to reflect the structural changes that have occurred in the economy since 1981–82 - the base year of the current series. The Working Group would review the composition of the existing index and suggest items that would merit inclusion or exclusion in the new series, together with the new base year. The analysis undertaken by the Working Group is at an advanced stage.